

Claims

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for storing session data on a client computer, comprising:
 - encoding said session data in a tag-length-value format to create encoded configuration data;
 - encrypting said encoded configuration data using a modified encryption key to create encrypted encoded configuration data;
 - concatenating a secret, a length of the secret, and a length of the length of the secret with said encrypted encoded configuration data to form a session cookie; and
 - transmitting said session cookie to said client computer.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said modified encryption key comprises a standard encryption key with said secret inserted at a predefined location.
3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said modified encryption key further comprises a time stamp indicating a time at which said modified encryption key is created.
4. The method of Claim 3, further comprising:
 - requesting said session cookie from said client computer;
 - receiving said session cookie from said client computer;
 - extracting said secret from said session cookie;
 - creating said modified encryption key by inserting said secret extracted from said session cookie into said standard encryption key at said predefined location; and
 - decrypting said session data from said cookie using said modified encryption key.
5. The method of Claim 4, further comprising:
 - decoding a tag from said session data;
 - determining whether said tag comprises a valid tag; and
 - in response to determining that said tag comprises a valid tag, configuring said server using data contained in said tag.
6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:

in response to determining that said tag does not comprise a valid tag, determining whether additional tags remain to be decoded from said encoded configuration data; and

in response to determining that additional tags remain to be decoded, decoding a next tag and determining whether said next tag comprises a valid tag.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:

in response to determining that said next tag comprises a valid tag, configuring said server using data contained in said next tag.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising:

in response to determining that additional tags do not remain to be decoded, periodically authenticating said session cookie.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein periodically authenticating said session cookie comprises:

starting a session timer;

determining whether said session timer has elapsed; and

in response to determining that said session timer has elapsed,

(i) requesting said session cookie from said client computer,

(ii) decrypting and decoding a tag contained in said session cookie,

and

(iii) determining whether said tag comprises a valid tag.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

in response to determining that said tag comprises a valid tag,

(i) generating a new session cookie,

(ii) transmitting said new session cookie to said client computer, and

(iii) resetting said session timer.

11. The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

in response to determining that said tag does not comprises a valid tag, ending a communications session between said server computer and said client computer.

12. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 1.

13. A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of Claim 2.

14. A computer-controlled apparatus for performing the method of Claim 1.

15. A computer-controlled apparatus for performing the method of Claim 2.

16. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, comprising:

 a first data field containing data representing a data length identifier and a tag type; and

 a second data field containing configuration data of said tag type and having a length described by said data length identifier.

17. The computer-readable medium of Claim 16, wherein said data structure further comprises a plurality of additional data structures comprising one of said first data field and one of said second data field for a plurality of tags.

18. The computer-readable medium of Claim 17, wherein said data length identifier comprises the first two bits of said first data field.

19. The computer-readable medium of Claim 17, wherein said data length identifier comprises data indicating that the length of said second data field is one byte.

20. The computer-readable medium of Claim 17, wherein said data length identifier comprises data indicating that the length of said second data field is four bytes.

21. The computer-readable medium of Claim 17, wherein said data length identifier comprises data indicating that said tag type comprises an extended tag type.